

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**OCT. 25, 2006**

## **NC'S TEEN TOBACCO-USE PREVENTION COMMERCIALS BACK ON THE AIR!** ***More than 50 percent of youth reached by TV spots, more work still to be done***

(RALEIGH, NC) – In a historic first, the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) will increase funding for its increasingly popular TRU (Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered.) TV campaign to \$4.5 million — up \$3.4 million from last year. Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, HWTF chair, today praised HWTF grantees, teen advocates and public health leaders for their efforts in the fight against teen tobacco use, noting that this year's TRU TV campaign is a step in the right direction.

"These TV commercials are a continuation of our mission to inform North Carolina's young people that tobacco use is dangerous and doesn't have a place in our schools, in our homes or in our communities," said Lt. Gov. Perdue. "The success of our media campaign to date is proof that we are doing our jobs. We're reaching young people at rates like never before, but it's imperative that we not let up — there's a lot of ground still to cover."

According to an evaluation conducted by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill researchers in the Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (TPEP), the TRU TV campaign — aimed at reducing teen tobacco use — has succeeded in its first two years in raising awareness of tobacco's dangers among North Carolina youth. The report shows a nearly 10 percent increase in awareness of the ads from 2004 to 2005, with more than half of young people statewide now aware of them.

The TRU media campaign first launched in April 2004 with three TV spots. They featured North Carolina teens telling personal stories of loved ones who had suffered serious health consequences from tobacco use. The ads — funded by HWTF — were developed with information from a comprehensive report on best practices in youth tobacco prevention ads. The first ads aired until October 2004, with a second series airing in the fall and winter of 2005.

Upon UNC TPEP's recommendation in this year's evaluation report, HWTF is increasing funding for the TRU campaign to allow this year's TV spots to air in more markets, for longer periods of time. Seven ads will begin airing in markets statewide this week and will continue for one year.

Included in the seven spots are two new, never-before-aired ads — "Adoption" and "Compliance" — that highlight the importance of the state's 100% Tobacco-Free Schools (TFS) policy, which prohibits tobacco use anytime, anywhere on public school grounds in participating school systems.

Both "Adoption" and "Compliance" were filmed at stops along HWTF's first-ever 100% Tobacco Free Schools Touchdown Tour in the fall of 2005. The Touchdown Tour visited six high schools across the state during Friday night football games and included a traveling teen tobacco use prevention festival, educational exhibits and testimonial tents, where tour attendees were filmed telling their schools' stories.

**To view the ads, please go to [www.healthwellinc.com](http://www.healthwellinc.com). Click on the *TRU Stories* link for the TRU ads and the *100% Tobacco Free Schools* link for the TFS Ads.**

Below is a brief description of each of the seven spots that will begin airing this month:

- "Adoption" features Gates County Superintendent Robert F. Hahne, Durham County Athletics Director Pete Shankle and Tony Scott, a Durham Public Schools parent, explaining the importance of adopting a 100% TFS policy.
- "Compliance" highlights the positive impact of 100% TFS compliance. Page High School Principal Dr. Terry Worrell and cheerleaders from Wilmington's E. A. Laney High School High School provide their testimonies about tobacco use at their schools.

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- “Facing Reality” explains the dangers of spit tobacco use. Roy Turner, athletics director at Southeast Guilford High School explains how young baseball players want to mimic their heroes, some of whom use spit tobacco. Also featured, Gruen Von Behrens, an oral cancer survivor, discusses how prolonged spit tobacco has disfigured his face.
- “Family Loss” features North Carolinians discussing how tobacco use affected their families and their well being.
- “Stop & Think” features a teen who explains how prolonged tobacco use ended her grandmother’s life.
- “Travelogue” was filmed during the 2004 TRU Summer Road Trip, which was a makeshift tobacco-use prevention festival that was held throughout North Carolina.
- “Truth & Consequences” demonstrates the debilitating effect tobacco can have on the body. Once an active young girl, Terrie Hall, an N.C. native, explains how smoking contributed to her developing lung cancer, a result of which was surgery to have her voice box removed. She now speaks with the aid of an electromechanical device.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the TRU TV campaign to date, UNC TPEP has conducted three waves of telephone surveys. A baseline survey in March and April 2004 reached 634 youth between the ages of 11 and 17. Follow-up surveys took place immediately after the fall 2004 ad campaign and following the 2005 fall and winter campaign.

Findings from the most recent report, [http://fammed.unc.edu/TPEP/tru\\_media.htm](http://fammed.unc.edu/TPEP/tru_media.htm) show that the TRU media campaign has made significant headway in communicating the tobacco-use prevention message to North Carolina’s young people, but that there are challenges still to overcome.

Significant accomplishments stated in the report include:

- Awareness of TRU ads increased from 45 percent of NC youth in 2004 to 54 percent in 2005.
- For the TRU ad campaign to undergo rigorous testing, the Charlotte media market received a higher dose of ads than any other area in the state. This test demonstrated that youth in the Charlotte media market had significantly greater awareness of the TRU campaign (69 percent vs. 49 percent) than youth in other parts of North Carolina. Therefore, the UNC TPEP researchers recommended that the higher dose of ads that ran Charlotte should be the dose that runs statewide in the future. HWTF heard the researchers’ recommendations and expanded the ad campaign’s depth and breadth.
- More than 90 percent of youth who saw the 2005 ads reported that they were convincing, attention-grabbing, and gave good reasons not to smoke. More than 25 percent said they had talked to their friends about the ads, indicating high “chat value.”
- At least one-third of NC youth recognize the campaign’s brands, logos and slogans: “TRU,” “Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered,” and “What’s it gonna take?”

However, the 2006 evaluation report also shows these significant barriers remain:

- A lack of sufficient and continuous funding for the TRU campaign has limited its exposure and resulted in less than optimal levels of awareness.
- More than 50 percent of youth say they believe that most people their age think it is OK to smoke, despite the fact that more than 80 percent say they don’t approve of people their age smoking.
- Roughly one-third of non-smoking youth remain susceptible to smoking and 11 percent remain susceptible to smokeless tobacco products.

The report concludes that “the TRU Media Campaign is likely contributing to the positive impacts of the state’s education, prevention, and policy efforts targeting youth tobacco use ... As the first step in any effective public health campaign is to increase awareness, the NC TRU campaign is on the right track.”

**Lt. Gov Bev Perdue will be available for comment by phone from 9:45 – 10:15 a.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2006. If you are interested in speaking with her, please call Jim Davis at 919-733-4028 (w) or 919-796-8791 (c).**

#### **About NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund**

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina’s share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).